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OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT UNDER THE GOSPEL.

"Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."—Isaiah, 32 : 15.

This chapter opens with a glowing reference to the coming and kingdom of Christ. It proceeds to a view of terrible judgments that were to fall on the Jews for rejecting the Messiah. Their rich fields would be overspread with briars and thorns, their palaces forsaken, their strong holds demolished, and their splendid capital become the abode even of wild beasts. This dreary scene would last, the prophet intimates, *until the Spirit were poured out from on high*. Then fruitfulness, peace, and prosperity in every form would return;—*the wilderness would become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a forest*. Unquestionably this language is figurative, indicating a change great and delightful indeed, but a change in moral rather than natural scenery. And it is clearly presented as a direct result of the descent of the Holy Ghost.

To some extent the predictions before us have been fulfilled. The Saviour has come, and laid the foundations of his glorious empire. His countrymen, in a spirit of malignant infidelity, resisted his claims; and they experienced his withering curse. The Spirit has been copiously shed forth; and millions, both Jews and Gentiles, have enjoyed the sanctifying influence. The redeeming process is

* The Assembly that held its sessions in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

still advancing; and all nations shall yet joyfully recognize the Son of David as their King.

In this moral movement and triumph, the great Agent is the *Holy Spirit*. Other influences co-operate; but they are all very subordinate, and the achievement is his. This truth is clearly recognized in the text; and no Bible truth is plainer. He enlightens, awakens, convinces, renews, and safely conducts the redeemed sinner through his multiplied perils to the promised rest. It is not my design, however, to dwell on his official work, with the view of explaining and defending it. The truth on this subject is familiar, and admitted, I trust, freely, practically, gratefully. The text is a prediction, looking to events of thrilling interest that were to occur under the Gospel. The general fact presented is *the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost*; and it will be my aim to show,

I. THAT THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT IS A PROMINENT FEATURE OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION; AND,

II. ON WHAT PRINCIPLES THE GRACIOUS INFLUENCE IS BESTOWED.

True, the presence and power of the Spirit were granted in a measure before the advent of the Son. His sanctifying agency is identified with the entire history of holiness. And there are clear traces of piety back through the Jewish nation,—to the deluge—and even to the children of the first pair. There were examples of very eminent godliness; and there were times, too, especially among the “chosen people,” of extensive religious quickening. And still the heavenly influence is unspeakably *more marked*, as one of the characteristics of Gospel times.

The outpouring of the Spirit, as a leading feature of the Gospel dispensation, was,

1. *A matter of direct prediction by the prophets.*

Said *David*, He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth;—and *Isaiah*, I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses;—and *Ezekiel*, Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God;—and *Zechariah*, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. In *Joel* there is a pas-

sage of still plainer and broader import. It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit. This prophecy, it will be recollected, was referred to by Peter on the memorable day of Pentecost, and its fulfilment avowed in the wonders wrought under his preaching.

Such predictions, it will not be doubted, all look to events under the Gospel. Their reference to the work of the Spirit is also explicit. And they exhibit his influence by imagery adapted certainly to make a strong impression of its extent and power. It is not simply the gentle dew of night: it is the copious shower of summer. It is not limited to any point of time, or to any given spot, or to any particular class: it falls upon high and low, young and old, of all nations, at all periods. It is presented as a standing and striking characteristic of the christian economy. Is any feature recognized with more explicitness or brighter coloring?

2. *The extraordinary effusion of the Spirit is implied in such predictions as relate to the general triumphs of the Gospel.*

The Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places. Break forth into joy; sing together, ye waste places. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows? The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. I will give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Prophecy of this character is abundant. It holds up a mighty moral renovation. And the magnitude of the achievement is sufficient evidence of peculiar displays of divine power. What other agency can meet successfully the array of ignorance, prejudice, and stratagem; and carry forward the cross against principalities and powers? In such a conflict, enterprise and energy are certainly right; but the church, with all her combinations, and all her zeal and courage, has strength only in the Lord and in the power of his might. She can plant and water, but God only giveth the increase. And with him all things are possible. Every valley shall be exalt-

ed, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

3. *The Spirit was promised by Christ as a prominent feature in the progress of the Gospel.*

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

These pledges are exceedingly explicit. They set forth the personality and agency of the Holy Ghost with a distinctness utterly unknown before. They are also rich in consolation. To the disciples it was an unspeakable privilege to have the presence and counsels of their Master. But in the promised Spirit they would find a substitute of even better adaptation to the exigencies of themselves and the world. Filling all space, though unseen and unheard, he would be an abiding source of light and comfort to the good; inspiring them with enterprise, and courage, and supernatural power. He would quicken perception, and wake up conscience, and lay open eternal scenes, in a manner to overawe and subdue the wicked. And thus he would carry christianity in triumph from city to city, and from state to state, to the quiet possession of the whole earth.

Who does not discern a *fitness* in the arrangement we are noticing? The incarnation was the opening of a wonderful dispensation. No epoch of time has its circumstances of such absorbing interest. The Son of God stood out to view conspicuously as attempting the recovery of a lost province. He executed the needful mission. For a time he prosecuted the enterprise in person. Opposition was roused; expectation was kindled. What but a progress of peculiar power and triumph could correspond to a commencement so imposing? What else could break the exultation of his enemies over his crucifixion, and dissipate the gloom of his friends?

That the outpouring of the Spirit is a prominent feature of the Gospel dispensation is evident,

4. *As a matter of history.* On the day of Pentecost was preach-

ed the first sermon after the ascension of Christ. It was an occasion of indescribable interest. And what gave to it its extraordinary character? There is no evidence that, as one of the Jewish festivals, *that* Pentecost excited any unwonted attention. As usual, there was a large assemblage, and from diverse provinces. The mere zeal and intrepidity of the disciples could have excited but a limited notice, and caused but a transient impression. The great signalizing circumstance was the presence of the Spirit, quickening intellect, imparting the gift of tongues, allaying prejudice, and carrying conviction to the hearts of three thousand. In a few days the gracious visitation was repeated, and five thousand were added to the disciples. Thus christianity secured at once a footing in distant cities and provinces, triumphing to the astonishment of both friends and foes. The evidence of divine interposition was overwhelming. Never were results on any other subject so utterly disproportionate to the means employed. And we do not wonder that an opposition, resolute and powerful, was soon completely palsied.

But the demonstration of the Spirit was not to be temporary. It was a vital and marked provision of the new dispensation. And it has been developed conspicuously in the progress of the Gospel. The church has had its seasons of dismal declension: but it has had, too, its periods of signal revival and enlargement. By what is the present age more specifically and strongly characterized, than by the outpouring of the Spirit? This it is which is giving vitality to truth, multiplying the good, kindling a bold religious enterprise, and producing aggressive movements of every form, and in every direction, against the empire of darkness. Let the divine mercy but be gratefully recognized, and the heavenly influence properly cherished, and the hopes of true benevolence can hardly compass too much.

We have, then, explicit prediction relating to the descent of the Spirit; we have prophecy concerning the general triumph of the Gospel, involving the same fact; we have the plain pledges of Christ a little before he finished his mission; we have the voice of history;—all showing that the outpouring of the Spirit is a prominent feature in the Gospel dispensation. It has no characteristic of more striking aspect, or more vital importance to its success. It is the very secret of all its past achievements, and the pledge of its universal triumph.

We are to inquire,

II. *On what principles the gracious influence is bestowed? And,*

1. *It is given in connection with Gospel light and ordinances.*

It is not the way of the Spirit to operate independently of means. His general instrumentality is *religious truth*. By this he informs the understanding, quickens the conscience, rouses all the active principles; and thus he brings up a new and nobler moral character. The intervention of such secondary influence is clear from the whole tenor of Scripture. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

But while in the great work of renovation the Spirit thus employs divine truth, it is not his plan, to any considerable extent certainly, to make the presentation himself. We know he could do it with utmost ease. He communicated treasures of knowledge to Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, and Paul. What can hinder his access with stores as rich to every human mind? And yet he has finished his revelations, and committed them to his people to be distributed over the earth. And without their co-operation darkness prevails, and the work of salvation is stayed.

This order of divine grace is implied in the very *appointments* of God, as well as directly revealed. Where no vision is the people perish. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. And hence he instituted the ministry—he appointed the Sabbath and its ordinances—he enjoined parental supervision and instruction—he threw out precepts urging his people to unremitted self-denial, enterprise, and activity, as laborers together with himself. And who can question the meaning of these multiplied and solemn arrangements? In view of them what christian can fail to canvass carefully his own responsibilities in reference to the great cause of salvation?

As a matter of *history*, too, when has the Spirit been poured out except in connection with christian instruction?—and when, to any considerable extent, independently of the regular institutions of religion? If God can consistently dispense with such instrumentality, why is his Spirit, age after age, withheld from the immense Pagan and Mohammedan community? And why in christian lands are the waste places left, like the mountains of Gilboa, without rain or dew? As a general fact, none is better established from observation than that divine influences follow

in the track of religious culture. It is so in respect to individuals. It is so in respect to communities.

There is, then, a *preparation* for the visits of the Sanctifier. And as to its character God has not left us in the dark. We must have our Sabbaths, and churches, and Bibles, and ministry. We must have our domestic religion, and other social organizations for religious influence. We must unlock before men the treasures of inspiration, and lay open the realities of the divine character and government, and draw aside the veil that hides eternal scenes. Let intellect be well informed, and conscience and passion roused by such applications,—let God's revealed system of culture be faithfully honored,—and it will be no presumption to anticipate the renovating work on the heart. He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. But,

2. The Spirit is poured out in connection with *efficient christian and ministerial action*.

It is not enough that the *form* of religious institutions be maintained. There must be the *substance*. It is not enough that general views of the christian system be acquired. The more comprehensive, and accurate, and vivid the perceptions the better. And the more familiar one is with the Gospel, in the detail of its glorious and awful revelations, the more hopeful is his case. Hence little is to be expected from abstruse, dark, tame, and infrequent exhibitions of the truth. It is not such efforts that the good Spirit has been wont very greatly to honor.

The amount of visible success is not indeed a perfect criterion of fidelity. Far from it. The field may be new and rugged, and consequently the immediate harvest be limited. In a given case there may be numerous and formidable embarrassments to the proper action of the truth and Spirit, abridging and delaying the desired result, and taxing severely the patience and faith of God's people. At the same time little will be any where achieved independently of prompt, energetic, and persevering exertion. There is a connection betwixt means and ends in the moral as well as natural world. It is a connection that gives scope for any degree of industry, energy, and skill. And no well-directed efforts have ever been misapplied. The harvest has very uniformly corresponded with the character of the labor bestowed. The liberal soul has been made fat. The church that has sowed

sparingly has reaped sparingly, while that which has sowed bountifully has also reaped bountifully. Where is the intelligent, enterprising, spiritual fraternity, that has not been refreshed by the frequent visits of the Spirit? And where is the discriminating, evangelical, and devout ministry, that has not been honorably approved by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost? I know that Paul may plant and Apollos water in vain, except God give the increase. I know, too, that he has always been pleased to grant his blessing and bestow the increase in a wonderful proportion to the wisdom and efficiency of the labor. And what child of grace would have it otherwise? Who would have him reverse the economy of his mercy, and become the great public patron of indolence and worldliness? It would not only be bringing reproach on himself, but haltings and ruin on his church. How is christian grace ever brightened and strengthened but in trial? Who have risen high in godliness, and in their example administered instruction and reproof that have been felt, and by their unquestionable union to Christ, and their brilliant triumph at the grave, extorted from worldlings, and even infidels, the aspiration, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his? And the discipline that nurtures individual grace, is adapted to preserve and elevate the church at large. It would be no mercy in the Sovereign,—it would rather be a judgment,—to withdraw her responsibilities and give her respite from toil and trial. The effects of ease and secular prosperity have been seen in other times—seen in her rapid and almost irrecoverable decline. As a means of spirituality she needs discipline. As a means of perpetuating her existence, and extending her moral sway, she needs to be tasked to her utmost capacity: and she mistakes her highest interest if she ever evades hardship, or goes to the work of God with a reluctant step, or thinks a moment of having too much to do. The great Agent might spare her service with infinitely less inconvenience than she could lose the opportunity of laboring in his vineyard.

3. The Spirit is poured out in answer to prayer.

On this point the teachings of the Bible and divine providence are exceedingly clear. We are directed to make supplication for every desirable object. But prayer for the *Spirit* is singled out, and in one form and another very specially marked. It is

the richest of God's gifts ; and there is a propriety in its being sought with utmost importunity. And the encouragement to such prayer is most ample. Nor is there reasonable hope in any other form. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; yet for all this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do this thing for them. You have God's views of the duty and value of prayer in his direction to the prophet. Prophecy and say, Come from the four winds, O Breath, breathe upon the slain that they may live. You have its necessity and worth very emphatically and fully presented by Christ. Ask, and ye shall receive. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

In perfect harmony with the Bible is the unbroken testimony from history. What interest is thrown around that upper chamber where the hundred and twenty met on the day of Pentecost. What scenes attended that season of associated supplication. How illustriously was the promise fulfilled ; before they call I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking I will hear. And when and where has the Spirit been ever copiously shed forth but in answer to fervent entreaty ? And how abundant and striking have been the answers to prayer, when the church has felt her impotency, and grasped by faith the divine promises. How often has the blessing gone beyond even her largest expectations, so that she has stood still, and witnessed the salvation of God with mingled gratitude, humility, and wonder. When and where have showers of the heavenly influence descended, while the brotherhood, as a body, were immersed in secular and selfish concerns, and heartless in their supplications ? And what surer presage of the sweeping victories of the Spirit have you ever desired, than a general sentiment of regard for Christ, and solicitude for souls, and a general spirit of agonizing intercession ? And with what courage and comfort, in such connections, have you entered the field as laborers together with God.

The foregoing view has its important practical bearings.

1. *It leads us to hope for revivals of religion of increasing power.*

The work of the Spirit is a leading feature of the Gospel. The gracious influence accompanies christianity wherever in its purity it goes, and is the secret of its sanctifying power. It has already been bestowed to a very marked extent. And the Bible

gives no intimation of a suspension, but rather leads us to calculate on its continuance as a vital characteristic of the christian economy. And why, in respect to the frequency and extent of revivals, should there not be *advancement*? We should anticipate it, certainly, from the whole analogy of God's dispensations. In all his transactions there has been progress. There was progress in the work of *creation*—progress of very interesting character. In *religion* he has been making new developements from the beginning of time. The work of direct *revelation* ran through a long series of ages, the revelations becoming plainer, and fuller, and richer, at every stage. The scheme of *redemption* was opened by degrees. Its whole execution is stamped with the aspect of progressive movement. And since the advent of Christ, so much more striking is the *outpouring of the Spirit* than in the earlier periods, that it is almost a peculiarity of the Gospel.

As a system of religion, christianity is advancing. It is to be the religion of the world. And every important achievement involves the interposition of the Spirit. And why should not this feature in the Gospel be developed as conspicuously as any other, and in its properly advancing proportions?

The Spirit is poured out, too, as we have seen, in a manner to put honor upon the *truth* and upon *instrumental agency* generally. Connected with this fact we can see a pledge of unprecedented displays of his quickening power. The compass of evangelical influence is rapidly enlarging. The means of throwing divine truth before the world are fast multiplying. The church is training her choicest sons for the holy altar; and the ministry is increasing in number and perhaps efficiency. The powers of the religious press are fast augmenting. Christian benevolence is extending and perfecting her schemes of religious enterprise. The sublimest truths of revelation are coming to be put into a form adapted to the comprehension of the unlettered. Bible-classes, and Sunday-schools, and other expedients, are bringing the mass of *children* under a strong evangelical influence, rendering them fit subjects for the action of the Spirit before inveterate principles and habits of ungodliness shall have secured their ruin. And in such constantly increasing favorable circumstances it will indeed be strange if the visits of the Holy One do not become more common, and of a more imposing character.

We cannot doubt, indeed, that the time is hastening when God

will emphatically dwell with men. The dreary periods of declension will gradually shorten and disappear. The reviving influences will come with more frequency, with greater power, to a wider extent, with increased continuance, till ultimately an unbroken cloud may overspread the world, giving the fertility and beauty of Eden to the whole earth. These are unquestionably the scenes that are to usher in the latter day. And if all the expounders of prophecy have not been mistaken, the process is to go on with a vastly accelerated movement. How else shall the mighty moral revolution be effected? How else shall states, and empires, and continents almost, be brought up from their deep degradation to light and purity, and that in the short period anticipated? With man this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. He can rend the heavens; and the mountains shall flow down at his presence. He can make the wilderness a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a rich waving forest. He can work, and who shall let it?

Let, then, the *revival sentiment* be extended and strengthened among us. It is the pure sentiment of christianity. And nothing is so essential to our growth, and efficiency, and glory, as a branch of the great christian family. Let God's grace, in the signal descent of his Spirit on our churches the last year, be very gratefully recognized and hailed as the promise of still brighter days. Let no heart faint, and no hand falter in the momentous matter of *revivals*. Though they have had their counterfeits they are a blessed reality. And like other gifts of God, they must be valued, desired, and sought, by united and earnest prayer, and the untiring use of all Scriptural means.

2. *The subject holds up forcibly the responsibility of christians at the present time.* Their responsibility has never been trivial. It has always been of a nature to afford a powerful stimulus to fidelity. But as time goes on, and all Gospel designs are advancing to their consummation, it is manifestly increasing. The Holy Spirit does not work alone. He requires their efficient co-operation. There are certain fixed principles on which his reviving influences are poured out, as fixed, perhaps, as any other laws of the infinite Sovereign, and they involve prompt, energetic, enterprising, whole-hearted christian action, as well as earnest prayer.

Is it a privilege, brethren, to live in these latter days? Do

signs of one sort and another betoken great moral changes? Is there reason to hope for vastly more decisive exhibitions of God's gracious presence? Is the era of revivals in glorious progress? How can it be otherwise than that unwonted responsibilities are upon you? It is yours to watch the indications of divine providence; to hail the coming of the Spirit with gratitude; to seek untiringly his holy presence; and in every form to prepare the way, especially by getting and keeping your hearts in a right frame. It is yours to pour floods of Bible light upon the world, christian and pagan, upon all ranks and classes, the learned and ignorant, the sober and vicious, the old and young. It rests with you to make a fair and strong presentation of eternal truth to the unsanctified intellect, and conscience, and heart of the world. It is a labor *the Spirit does not choose to perform*. It rests with you to cultivate the field, that God may in mercy grant the fruit in its season. And why should you live and be a christian in days of the peculiar manifestation of the Spirit, if you cannot cherish the self-denial, and spirituality, and enterprise, for which the exigencies call? Why were you not born at a period of less stir and promise—why not born a thousand years ago—if you cannot come up to the high mark of generosity and energy your Lord has fixed for the church of this day?

You will look with satisfaction at the signs of the times, and sympathize strongly in the movements of the Holy Ghost, and labor as if you hoped and rejoiced that the redemption of the world was drawing near. I plead for nothing boisterous, or arrogant, or obtrusive in the exhibitions of your zeal for God and souls. The Gospel only reprobates such loftiness and rashness. But still I urge the reality of personal responsibility. The humblest of believers has his "talent," that must neither be perverted nor buried. He has his place and his importance under the common Master. His measure of duty is his amount of opportunity. And you need not the aid of church office, or high endowments, or great notoriety, to exert a healthful moral influence, and be a minister of salvation to many a lost soul. The grand secret of usefulness, as well as essence of piety, is an evangelical spirit. Cultivate the temper of Christ, and it will be easy, like him to go about doing good.

Probably the sentiment of *individual* christian responsibility is extending and deepening. And why should it not? The Bible urges it. Divine Providence is decisively encouraging it. When

the Holy Spirit is abroad, predisposing to religious inquiry, a little effort leads often to momentous results. Thousands are now rejoicing in hope who were first put upon serious thought in connection with very humble instrumentality. Let old and young, professing godliness, realize their high calling. Each has his proper sphere, and should be about his Father's business. And were all walking in the Spirit, and making the most of their powers and opportunities, what triumphs of grace might gladden the world! And how painful the contrast. Who can estimate the mischief and sin of a dubious example, and of keeping back from the help of the Lord when religious tenderness and thought are abroad? You grieve the Spirit. You quiet conscience. You encourage procrastination. You lead, unintentionally, indeed, immortals away from hope and heaven.

3. *The subject is of special interest to the ministers of Christ.*

Every disciple is committed for the service of God: but the minister is *officially* devoted to the cause of religion. And it is his high honor to co-operate more directly and exclusively with the great Captain of salvation. His labors and responsibilities, at any time, are enough to crush an angel. But they seem to be augmenting every year. When God is pouring out his Spirit it is the season of harvest; and there is not an hour to be lost. When there are decisive tokens of his readiness to bless, his servants must be all on the alert, and task every power for the required labor. And who is blind to the fact that we are now passing through an era of religious revival? Where can you preach the Gospel of salvation without a listening ear, I may almost say without a melting heart? The field is the world; and it is all open. The summons from God to his ambassadors to labor directly for the conversion of souls is distinct and loud. It is a voice not for any single class of peculiar *name* and *gifts*, but for *every* man invested with the sacred office. In carrying on revivals in our churches, perhaps *pastors* have not all felt sufficiently their personal responsibility and importance. Foreign aid may unquestionably sometimes be brought in advantageously. The exigency may call for more labor than the pastor can seasonably execute. And associated action, if harmonious, is always effective. But when the Comforter is on his way, and souls are to be waked up and moulded for heaven, it is no time for the pastor to stand aside in utter silence for some one else, as if there were a *quality* of work for which he was incompetent. Why should the

immediate co-operation with the Holy Ghost be left for a favored few? Distinguished lights, indeed, there have always been in the church in every department of labor—in theological disquisition—in benevolent enterprise—in revivals of religion. And they will live in the affections of the good to the end of time. Gradation in every thing is the order of divine providence. But what minister can plead the diversity of gifts and graces as an apology for attempting and accomplishing little? God has given you a field to cultivate in *person*, not by *proxy*. The church needs and expects your enlightening and stimulating influence. But the Gospel, every where and in all times, seeks still grander results,—it aims at the *conversion of the unholy*. And God has placed them by scores under your special charge. And he has appointed you to no labor for which you can be innocently unqualified. Take up then, I affectionately beseech you, I solemnly charge you, my dear brother, in common with myself, the great work in earnest. Preach and pray for the awakening and salvation of the dead in sin; do it with an eye single to the glory of God, and most likely you will give back your commission with honorable testimonials of your fidelity. And if the Spirit shall signally bless your generous aims and efforts, who can anticipate the richness of reward that awaits you? Those spiritual children will follow you through life, in affection and prayer. They will remember you in death. They will be your joy at the judgment, before the throne. And through divine grace you shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever.

And what can be said of a tame and heartless, or misdirected ministry, in such a day as this? Who sees not woes unutterable for the watchman who can sleep at his post, or busy himself with trifles, with the perils of spiritual death thick about him, and that, too, when the good Spirit is hovering over his charge, waiting to second his very first and faintest note of alarm? Privilege and responsibility always go hand in hand. And the privilege of being a minister of Jesus Christ has never been so great as now. As stewards of God may we all seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and labor with a zeal and efficiency becoming our office and our age.

4. *Let ministers and all Christians aim at more uniform and marked "fellowship of the Spirit."*

Notions vague, wild, and even impious, have often been cherished in regard to the Spirit's influence. And still his presence with believers is a reality as plain as any Bible truth, or any matter of

consciousness. Whence but from him did the primitive disciples derive their wonderful gifts, and courage, and success? But his presence and aid were not granted for a single emergency, or any limited period; they were to be identified with the whole future history of the church. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The Scriptures on this subject too naturally make the impression of a *strong sympathy, and a close alliance*. Like the Son of God in his humiliation, the blessed Spirit stoops to a kind of companionship with the saints. Apostles speak of them as the "temple of the Holy Ghost;" as being "led by the Spirit;" as "filled with the Spirit;" as having "the witness of the Spirit," "the communion of the Holy Ghost." And may it not be hoped that, as time goes on, the bonds of this hallowed association will be strengthened? Will not the church better understand its nature and worth, and be less interruptedly blessed with its benefits? Is any thing more needed by her pastors, her members at large? Here and there one has had precious experience, and made delightful exhibitions of the reality and value of this holy fellowship. It has enriched their hopes, brightened their views of truth, and enlarged their aims. It has secured discretion, steadiness, and energy in action. It has infused fervor, compass, pertinence, and power into their prayers. Their whole bearing as christians has at once fastened the conviction that they were acting under impulses, and breathing an atmosphere of no common purity, and fitted for achievements of no ordinary moment. Why should not others, of equal weakness and equal responsibility, covet the same advantages, and reach the same moral elevation? We all want the temper that springs from reverential and humble familiarity with God. We want the habit of planning and acting in concert with the Holy Ghost. This surely is the true life of godliness. And in it we might find safety, and comfort, and strength. In days of the peculiar manifestation of the Spirit, shall it not become the general and settled character of the church? How bright would be the promise of peace, purity, efficiency!

5. *The case of such as live impenitent under the Gospel in this day, is peculiarly alarming.*—They live at a period of special and growing mercy. Those influences which secure salvation have greatly increased in number and power. Divine truth is made plain. It is held up to the mind more steadily than formerly, and the Holy Ghost more emphatically dwells with men. It is a time

when salvation is brought near, and has to be deliberately and resolutely thrust aside. So abundant are the outpourings of the Spirit, that it seems, fellow-sinners, as if you could be lost only by carrying on a steady and desperate resistance to the Holy Ghost. At every stage you are subject, more or less, to his influence. You hear his gentle monitions in childhood ; you feel his presence as you go to the sanctuary, as you listen to parental admonition, as you read the New Testament, or the religious tale, or the simple discussion suited to your years. You are followed by the heavenly influence up to manhood. He speaks to you sometimes indeed with a gentle, and sometimes with a heavier voice ; but he speaks and you understand his language. He allures to heaven ; he warns of perdition ; and no sinner living under these strong religious influences can go down to ruin under only the measure of guilt that has oppressed the wicked and the lost of other times. If he perish, unspeakably better had it been for him to have gone to the abyss three thousand years ago. Let the careless then wake up—wake, without a moment's delay, to a view of their state and prospects. What meanest thou, O sleeper? Escape from the fearful precipice on which you stand. Yield to the multiplied influences that seek your eternal life. Harken to conscience, and the Bible, and providence, and the Spirit, all mingling their efforts to pluck you as a brand from the burning. It is desperate infatuation to delay. As facilities for salvation multiply, the preparation for life or death is hastened. The decisions of a brief period will settle your eternal character and state. In these latter days, and under such floods of light as are poured upon yourselves, men are not going to devote their youth to pursuits of ambition or gain, to be brought into the holy kingdom in advanced or even middle life. O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end !